

FORM E - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, State House, Boston

In Area no.

E

Form no.

211



wn Lexington

dress 627 Mass. Ave.

me Obadiah Parker -
Monell - Dana house

esent use Private residence

esent owner Roland Gubisch

scription:

re c 1800; altered 1839

Source Wolken, p. 61

le Federal w/ Greek Revival alt.

Architect Curtis Capell. builder for
remodeling 1839

Exterior wall fabric Clapboard

Outbuildings (describe) barn - sheds

Other features front windows & door detail

pic granite foundation, brick ends windows
with "skirt" frame to lengthen their
appearance

Altered Ionic portico added
Yes Date 1839

Moved _____ Date _____

5. Lot size:

One acre or less _____ Over one acre x

Approximate frontage + 200'

Approximate distance of building from street

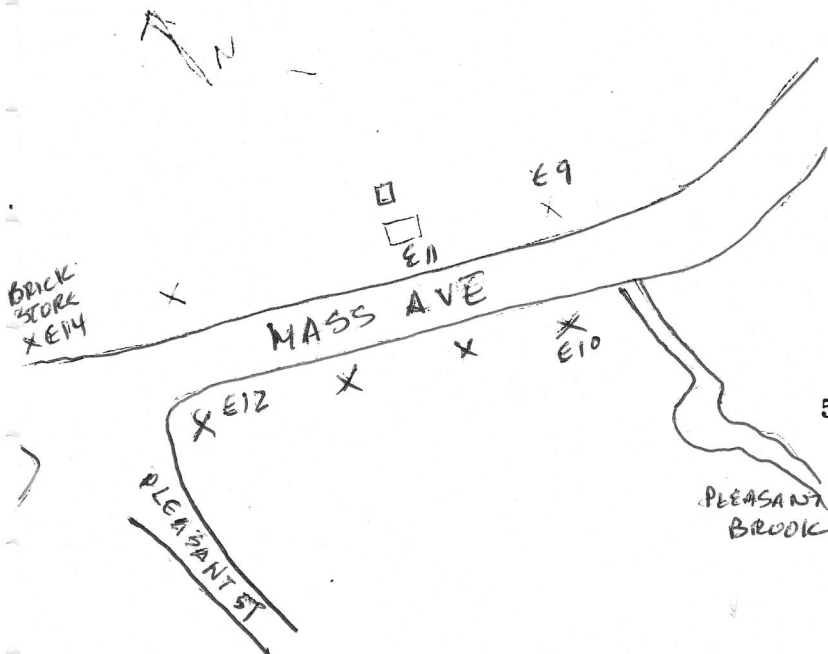
50'

6. Recorded by E. W. Reinhardt

Organization Lex. Hist. Com.

Date 7/75

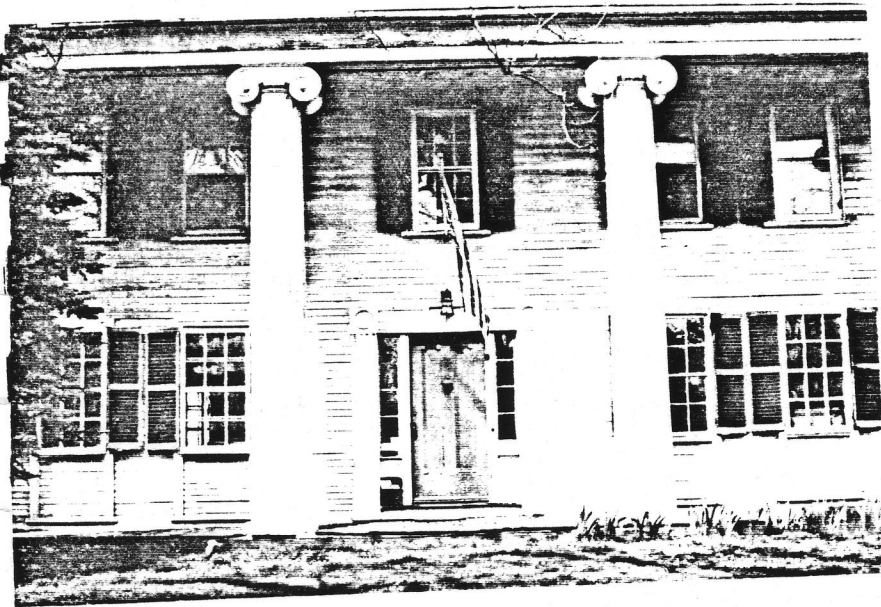
4. Map. Draw sketch of building location
in relation to nearest cross streets and
other buildings. Indicate north.



DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
USGS Quadrant _____

MHC Photo no. _____

(over)



Obadiah Parker
(although
he never lived in it)

Political

Recreation
Religion
Science/
invention
Social/
humanitarian
Transportation

9. Historical significance (include explanation of themes checked above)

Descrip- Columns - made in Lexington, Capitols carved in Boston. Ambrose Morell French, skillful in dying & handling furs, lived, kept store here. Feather clapboarding on rear.

History: Built by Francis Bowman, owned by Obadiah Parker, operator of town's first private school & Town Clerk. Financial difficulties led him to forgery & he skipped town c. 1804. Morell, French political refugee. Skillful in dying & handling furs later acquired house. Friend of Emerson & Charles Follen. Daughter Elizabeth married Otis Dana at Follen Church, Emerson officiating - Otis, brother of Richard Henry Dana. Ellen Dana - daughter of this marriage. Miss Ellen Dana died 1913 (EW p.110) this house and remainder of estate left to Lexington Home for Aged People (incorporated 1905 (EW p.10 with gift of \$1000 from Elizabeth W. Harrington.) Dana property sold 1916. Home for Aged buys 2027 Mass. Ave. (B-7) for "The Dana Home".

Ellen Dana prominent in cultural & social courses, friend of Julia Ward Howe.

Lafayette entertained by Morell when in Lexington in 1829.

10. Bibliography and/or references (such as local histories, deeds, assessor's records, early maps, etc.)

Lex. Hist. Soc. Proceedings. Vol. 4 - 1908

"Architectural yesterdays in Lexington." - Fred Piper

Ed. Worthen Calendar History, 1620-1946

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
627 MASS. AVENUE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The house at 627 Massachusetts Avenue is a unique structure, constructed c.1800 in the Federal style with brick ends and center entrance but renovated into a Greek Revival temple-form dwelling in 1839 by carpenter Curtis Capell. The broad triangular pediment extends the full width of the façade and projects forward, supported by four, two-story fluted Ionic columns. The shafts were constructed in Lexington but the capitals were carved in Boston. The front windows were apparently extended at the same time (Piper: 117). The door surround appears to be based on Plate XXVI of Asher Benjamin's pattern book, *The Practice of Architecture*, published in 1833 (Reinhardt: 34). It is one of a number of Asher Benjamin-inspired doorways which survive in East Lexington (see also 715, 782, 870, 884, 1106 Massachusetts Avenue).

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The house at 627 Massachusetts Avenue was constructed about 1803 by Obadiah Parker, the proprietor of a private school on Pleasant Street. Parker left town due to financial difficulties c.1804 and the house was reportedly never occupied until it was purchased by N. Ambrose Morrell, a French emigrant who came to Lexington before 1798 and was engaged in the fur dressing business. He married Sally Holbrook in January 7, 1805 and they began their residence here on their wedding day. The couple had five daughters. Elizabeth married Otis Dana in 1836 at Follen Church. Another daughter, Sarah, married Abraham Millet in 1838. The house was renovated in 1839 and the changes to the house and the laying out of the garden were planned by Sarah Millet (Piper: 117). Curtis Cappell was the carpenter in charge of the work.

In 1880 the house was owned and occupied by Otis and Elizabeth Dana, their daughter Ellen, and Elizabeth's sister, Sarah Millet. After Otis' death, Ellen Dana continued to live here with her mother and later, with servants. When Miss Dana died in 1913 the house and the remainder of her estate were left to the Lexington Home for Aged People which was incorporated in 1905. The house was sold in 1916 and the proceeds helped fund the purchase of 2027 Massachusetts Avenue for "The Dana Home".

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*.

Lexington Directories, various dates.

Lexington Minute-man, March 18, 1892.

Middlesex County Register of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Piper, Fred Smith. "Architectural Yesterdays in Lexington," *Proceedings of the Lexington Historical Society*, vol. IV, 1912, p. 117.

Reinhardt, Elizabeth and Anne A. Grady. "Asher Benjamin in East Lexington, Massachusetts", *Old-Time New England*, vol. LXVII, nos. 3-4, Winter-Spring 1977, pp. 34-35.

Worthen, Edwin B. *Tracing the Past in Lexington, Massachusetts*. New York: Vantage Press, 1998.

Supplement prepared by:
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